



January 17, 2003
TALON

Harvest operations continue in Multinational Brigade (North)

Inside this issue:

**401st Expeditionary Air Base changes command
POLAD - MNB(N)'s top diplomat**

Task Force Eagle www.tfeagle.army.mil

TALON

Published in support of
Operation Joint Forge
January 17, 2003
Volume 9, No.18

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The *Talon* is produced in the interest of the service members of Task Force Eagle. The *Talon* is an Army-funded magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the *Talon* are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle.

The *Talon* is published weekly by the Task Force Eagle Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina APO AE 09789. Email at Kelly.Luster@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil. The Task Force Eagle web address is www.tfeagle.army.mil. Printed by PrintComTuzla. Circulation: 3,500.

Word on the street...

"If you were a character on Gilligan's Island, who would it be and why?"



Sgt. Carmelo Aguinir
Audio/Visual Technician
13th Psyop Bn.

"Skipper, because he had leadership skills and always seemed to be on top of things. He also had a cool best friend."



Sgt. 1st Class Robert Foster
Retrans NCOIC
HHC, 28th ID

"The Professor because I like science."



Sgt. Kim Harden
Medical Supply NCOIC
145th Med. Log.

"Mary Ann, because she's a good old country girl."



Sgt. 1st Class David Kerin
Operations NCO
HHC, 28th ID

"The Skipper because it would be fun to be in charge."



Staff Sgt. Deb Winn
Med. Main. NCOIC
145th Med. Log.

"Ginger, because she has all the guys wrapped around her little finger."



Sgt. Justan Pratt
Intel. Analyst
628th MI Bn.

"The Professor because he seemed to know how to make different gadgets to help people."



About the covers: Front, A soldier guides a bulldozer as it prepares to crush more than 250 illegal weapons gathered during Harvest operations. *Photo by Spc. Jessica Abner.* **Back,** Col. Terry New, commander of the 16th AEW, passes the colors to incoming commander of the 401st EAWG, Col. Kent Williams. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster.*



401st EABG bids farwell to commander

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Kelly C. Luster

Editor, 354th MPAD

EAGLE BASE, Bosnia and Herzegovina — Over the past few weeks many changes have taken place here. In keeping with the trend, Col. Joseph D. Grasso's tenure as commander of the 401st Expeditionary Air Base Group is coming to a close.

As commander of the air base, which is adjacent to Eagle Base, Col. Grasso ensured safe and efficient flying activities, airfield operations, and aerial port operations in and around Tuzla Air Base. As the senior Air Force officer in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Grasso is the primary Air Force liaison to the commanding general of Multinational Brigade (North).

Grasso was commissioned in 1974 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Nebraska. His assignments include F-111 pilot, instructor pilot, fighter weapons instructor, standardization evaluation flight examiner, test project officer, and chief wing weapons and operations officer, to name a few. Grasso is rated as a command pilot with more than 2,494 flight hours.

In an official ceremony held January 13, 2003, Grasso addressed airman and distinguished guests.

"I will leave Tuzla Air Base with good memories and the knowledge that I was part of an efficient and effective organization charged with one very specific mission — operate an airfield in support of NATO peacekeeping efforts," said Grasso. "Make no mistake, we are very good at running an airfield."

Grasso said over the past four months the 401st EAWG supported more than 450 aircraft missions, 5,000 helicopter missions, moved 1,000 tons of cargo and 7,000 passengers with a perfect safety record.



Col. Joseph Grasso was awarded the NATO Medal and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for his service as part of NATO peacekeeping and Stabilization Forces in Bosnia.

"We were ready 24 hours a day without interruption to handle any and all aircraft movement," said Grasso. "During this time we have streamlined and reduced our manpower by 17 percent...we did it without eliminating or reducing any airfield operations."

Grasso was awarded the NATO Medal and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for his tenure as commander of the 401st EAWB in Bosnia.

Col. Terry L. New, commander, 16th Air Expeditionary Wing, officially passed the colors to the incoming commander, Col. Kent D. Williams. "We are engaged in a global war on terrorism. Some of you have been asked to make personal sacrifices — some have been asked to sacrifice even more. Each one of you, no matter how insignificant your contribution might seem,

is a vital and important member of our organization," said New. "Without you, we could not accomplish the mission. You are a beacon to those who seek peace in a troubled part of the world and a deterrent to those who would choose aggression. You represent the ideals those less fortunate aspire to."

The new commander of the 401st EAWG, Col. Kent D. Williams, comes to MNB (N) from his last assignment as the Dean of Students at the Air War College of Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. As Dean of Students, Williams was responsible for all Air War College resident student operations. He also served as a professor in the Department of Leadership and Ethics where the mission prepares senior officers for higher command and staff assignments by broadening their understanding of strategic leadership and strategic studies in support of national security policy.

Williams was commissioned through Air Force ROTC at Angelo State University. He has served as an Undergraduate Pilot Training instructor pilot, a fighter/reconnaissance instructor and evaluator pilot, director Airborne Battle Staff, Air Staff programmer, and an Air Staff executive officer.

Williams told guests at the change of command ceremony he is very excited to take command the 401st EAWG.

"I am excited for this opportunity, especially when the world situation is as volatile as it is today," said Williams. "We in the Air Force are part of an Air and Space Expeditionary Force... and though our operation in Bosnia is no longer on the front page or in the headlines everyday, we are still part of the Air Expeditionary Battle Rhythm and are key participants in a critical mission here in the Balkans. Command is an opportunity to make a difference — I look forward to the challenge the next four months will bring."

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the USO announces a poetry-writing contest. The theme of the contest is the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The contest is open to everyone. All entries must be received by Sunday, Jan. 19, 2003. Prizes will be awarded Jan. 20, Dr. King's birthday. In addition to re-

ceiving an award, the winner's poem will be published in the following issue of the Talon. Email entries to: Linda.Lorenzana@emailtc3.5sigcmd.army.mil. If you are not located on Eagle Base and are chosen as the winner, be sure to include your location so that your award may be forwarded to you. Good Luck!



Weapons harvest yields full crop

Story and photos by Spc. Jessica Abner

Assistant Editor, 354th MPAD

EAGLE BASE, Bosnia — Many years after the war, potentially life-threatening hazards such as weapons and munitions remain embedded throughout the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stabilization Force soldiers are working with local law agencies through the Active Harvest program to help rid the country of illegal weapons and hazards, that may cause injury and even worse — death.

On a cold, wintry day with a light snow falling, troops from the 104th Cav. and 103rd Engineer Bn., work together to destroy more than 250 rifles, magazines and munitions. As the bulldozer, driven by Staff Sgt. Brian Hollock, heavy equipment operator, 103rd Engineer Bn., slowly moves over the weapons, the crackling and snapping of the wooden gun stocks can be heard underneath the 26-ton machine.

The citizens of Bosnia, with a little help, may feel better about the responsibility and stewardship of their country by handing over harmful weapons. During the month-long event, soldiers of the 104th Cav. spent three and a half days going door-to-door asking locals to participate in the Active Harvest by surrendering any weapons on hand. A wide variety of weapons were turned in and according to Lt. Col. Anthony Gray, commander of Task Force Saber, 104th Cav., some of the weapons date back to the turn of the century.

"We collected World War II weapons, more recent manufactures, mostly AK-47s, bolt action Mauser-type weapons, and a wide variety of Thompson sub-machine guns," said Gray. In addition to those weapons, hundreds of mines were collected including anti-tank, antipersonnel, grenades,

and TNT.

Families have a right to feel safe in their homes and with the dangers of lethal weapons so persistent throughout Bosnia, one soldier said he is glad to be part of a mission that rids these threats from the country.

"We explained to the homeowners that it was very important to get these illegal weapons off the street and especially out of the hands of the kids. It was amazing how many kids had access to weapons," said Staff Sgt. Wersler Jones, cavalry scout, A Troop 104th Cav. "There was one woman who came out and had a hand grenade in one hand and an infant in the other."

The harvest mission provides citizens the opportunity to turn-in any illegal weapons with amnesty before the laws change. Soon, local law agencies will enforce the laws regulating the possession of illegal weapons without the assistance of SFOR.

According to Gray, the harvest program is voluntary, but citizens should turn them in prior to the law changing. "If people didn't turn them in, they need to do so soon because the threat is that these weapons could end up in the hands of a child and the consequences could be devastating," said Gray.

After the weapons are destroyed, they



Master Sgt. Paul Makely, ammunition technician, JMA, inspects weapons to ensure they are destroyed. The weapons will be smelted at a steel plant in Zenica.

are taken to a steel plant in Zenica to be smelted. Bosnian citizens and SFOR soldiers both feel good about what is being accomplished, according to Jones.

"Most of the people were more than willing to hand the weapons over. It's good to get these weapons off the streets," said Jones. "It's not a pleasant thing to have a hand grenade available for your children."

The goal is for SFOR to hand over the reigns of projects such as Active Harvest to local police and law enforcement agencies. This will enable the agencies to take the initiative and make the streets of Bosnia safer. Until then, SFOR soldiers will continue their patrols and will work with local officials in future harvest missions.

Helping cut the number of unsafe munitions is one goal of Multinational Brigade (North). Soldiers feel the harvest projects are a necessity and they are more than willing to help.

"I think this is a great mission. It's heartwarming and something that all my soldiers feel needed to be done," said Gray. "We feel we are contributing to a safe and secure environment here in Bosnia and we're just happy to be a part of it."



A 26-ton bulldozer demolishes more than 250 weapons collected during Active Harvest.

Keeping angels of mercy airborne

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Luster

Editor, 354th MPAD

EAGLE BASE, Bosnia and Herzegovina — “All alert elements. 9-1-1! 9-1-1!” From the time that call goes out over the radio, the 1159th Med. Co., has 15 precious minutes to have a UH-60 Black Hawk Air Ambulance ready for “wheels up” and in route to a casualty. It sounds simple enough. In reality, it takes a lot more than turning a key and flipping a few switches to get one of these off the ground.

Beyond what most of us see on the surface — the pilots, medics, and crew chiefs who all leave with the aircraft when it's time to save lives — there is a complex network of unsung heroes who keep the angels of mercy flying.

“Every time a pilot gets in the seat of one of our helicopters, he knows it's ready to go,” said Staff Sgt. Phillip Fournier, maintenance platoon sergeant, 1159th Med. Co.

According to Fournier, the maintenance platoon is responsible for most of scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on the aircraft of the air ambulance company.

“The flight platoon does some of the maintenance, but most of it falls to us,” said Fournier.

Just as the pilots, medics and flight crews spend time ‘on call,’ it is similar for the mechanics. “We are on call 24-7. And for most of the people in the maintenance platoon work an average day of at least 10 hours per day,” said Fournier. “On Sundays when a majority of the post has some down time, we still have a team on call.” That is if they aren't already performing some scheduled tasks, according to Fournier.

Although a day rarely goes by around Eagle Base when aircraft aren't flying, maintenance is kept to the strictest of schedules and done periodically if the bird has been on the ground.

“We do general maintenance on the aircraft,” said Spc. Emily LeClair, UH-60 Black Hawk mechanic. “Every 10 hours of flight time or, if the aircraft hasn't flown, every 14 days, we inspect specific parts of the aircraft.”

LeClair used the hydraulic system of the aircraft as an example of something that is not only checked thoroughly, but also regularly.

“It's just one of the things we check. The aircraft has a lot of hydraulics. If something goes wrong with the hydraulics, the aircraft could fall out of the sky,” said LeClair.

Beyond the obvious reasons for keeping the million dollar aircraft flying — cost



Spc. Emily LeClair, mechanic, helps hoist and new engine into a UH-60 Black Hawk.

— there is another very important part the maintenance platoon plays in the role of the air ambulance — people. The crews flying the helicopters and the soldiers whose lives may depend on that one aircraft taking off on time with no problems.

“Our mission here is to provide medevac capabilities for Multinational Brigade (North),” said Maj. Michael Jacques, commander. “We also provide additional support to other areas of Stabilization Forces in a mass casualty situation.”

Jacques said the mission of air medevac is vital to the overall mission in Bosnia.

“It's important for the soldiers here to have an asset such as air medevac. The terrain here is very rugged and the roads unforgiving. With bases in forward areas like FOB Connor or Camp McGovern, the air asset is a critical asset in this theater of operations.”

The air ambulance played a key role in saving two soldiers who were critically injured in an automobile accident recently.

“The accident site took about an hour and a half driving. It only took 18 minutes by air,” said Jacques. He said the harsh reality is that a soldier might have perished if were not for the capabilities of air medevac.

According to Jacques, aircraft are extremely complex and require a great deal of maintenance. “If a problem occurs, we can call upon our maintenance section to trouble-

shoot the problem,” Jacques said. “They can immediately determine whether we need to go to a second or even third aircraft. We can't afford to wait for someone to come out to look at these aircraft, lives may depend on us.”

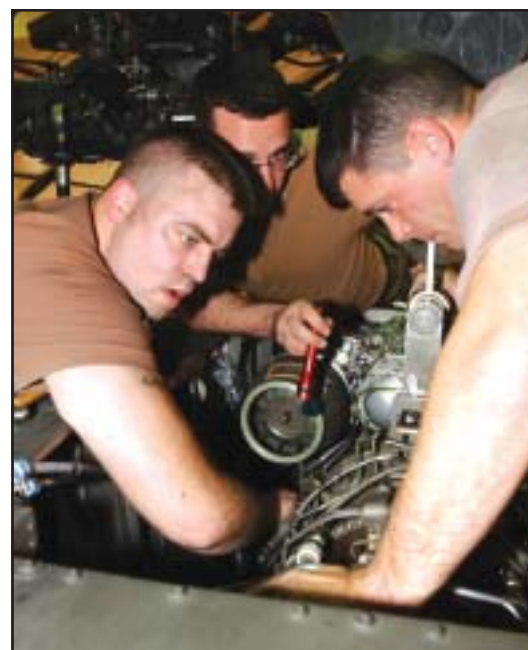
Often, there are those who compare the Reserve or National Guard assets to that of active duty soldiers. According to Jacques, he feels his maintenance section is actually better off than some active components.

“We're lucky in the Reserve component in the realm of maintenance,” said Jacques. “Rather than people moving from unit to unit, like on active duty, we have a core that has been with the unit for some time.” Jacques said it's that stable core of soldiers who are extremely proficient that makes the difference.

“Our requirements for maintenance and flying are identical to that of active duty units with the same mission,” Jacques said.

It is exactly those requirements and the dedication to their duty as the “soldiers behind the scenes” that allows every other soldier to rest assured that if they are in need of medical evacuation from any part of MNB (N), they need not worry.

“I push these soldiers,” said Fournier. “We are here to do MEDEVAC. If there is a problem with one of the aircraft, it could put a soldier's life in jeopardy. If something happened to a soldier because we put a repair off until tomorrow that we could have done today... I could never forgive myself. That's why these people will stay until the job is done — everyday.”



Sgt. Erich Spader, Sgt. Chris Cuddemi and Staff Sgt. Greg Gerbig work to secure a new engine into the UH-60 Black Hawk.

Small Pox vaccinations coming soon

Story by Kevin Larson

FORSCOM News Service

With the threat of smallpox being used as a bio-weapon against our military forces, the Commander-in-Chief, President. George W. Bush, in December ordered all Department of Defense military personnel to line up and get a smallpox vaccination.

Forces Command soldiers might start lining up as early as mid-January for their mandatory shots, according to the FORSCOM Surgeon. Just like the anthrax vaccine, smallpox will be mandatory because of force health protection issues.

"Everybody reads the papers, everybody watches CNN," Col. Phil Stikes, FORSCOM preventive medicine officer, said. "It's pretty obvious why we need it. We think potential enemies might have it."

More detailed implementation details will be worked out in the coming weeks.

Soldiers already deployed around the world in support of current operations will also be vaccinated, Stikes said.

"We're prepared to ship vaccine wherever, whenever," he said.

A limited number of DoD civilians who have been designated emergency essential will be asked to get a smallpox vaccination.

If you've been vaccinated before, though, and think you're good to go, you're not.

Those who have been vaccinated for smallpox in the past will need to get a new shot. The vaccination provides protection for three to five years, according to Stikes.

"Protection wanes over the years," he said.

The vaccine contains a live virus, but it is not smallpox. Instead, the vaccine is made from another pox virus, one closely related to smallpox.

But because the vaccine is made from a live, actively growing virus, there are certain key points to remember, Stikes said.

"Key points to remember after being vaccinated are don't touch the spot where the needle was stuck and don't let other people touch it," he said. "If the vaccination spot does get touched, wash your hands right away."

Touching the vaccination site can cause the vaccine to not take or spread the pox used in the vaccine to other areas of the body, according to Stikes. That can cause serious problems, especially near eyes or other moist areas of the body.

The vaccination site will be bandaged following the shot but the bandage can be taken off when the bleeding stops, Stikes said. Disposing the bandage is easy. Just put it in a plastic bag with some bleach and

throw it away.

When in close contact with others, though, it is best to keep a bandage over the vaccination site, Stikes said. It's also okay to do PT after being vaccinated, just make sure you bring your own towels for showering. That towel and any other clothes that touch the vaccination site will then have to be washed in hot water with soap and bleach.

People with compromised immune systems, who have had eczema or atopic dermatitis, have other skin conditions that have not yet cleared up and who are pregnant or breastfeeding, should not get the smallpox vaccination, Stikes said. Also, if you live with anyone who meets those conditions you should not get vaccinated.

If soldiers meet these medical exclusions and do not get the smallpox vaccination, they are still deployable, Stikes said. If there were a smallpox outbreak, however, medically excluded soldiers would have to roll up their sleeves and take the shot.

"In the event of a smallpox outbreak, their vaccination status would be reevaluated," Stikes said.

For soldiers who do not meet the exclusion criteria, refusal is not an option. If soldiers refuse the vaccination, the first step will be to educate them on the risks of smallpox, Stikes said. Since this is a force health protection issue, continued refusal will most likely be considered failure to follow a lawful order.

Side effects for the smallpox vaccine are usually mild, according to Stikes. They include sore arm, fever, headache, body ache and fatigue and peak after eight to 12 days following vaccination.

If soldiers have any concerns or experience any discomfort or side effects beyond those normally expected with the smallpox vaccination, then they should seek medical advice, Stikes said. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

You can tell if your vaccination was successful if you see a red, itchy bump form at the vaccination site.

"In the first week, the bump becomes a pus-filled blister," Stikes said. "Then, in the second week, a scab forms. The scab falls off in week three and leaves a small scar."

Although rare, there are some serious side effects possible from the vaccine, Stikes said. Out of one million people, 1,000 will have serious but not life-threatening reactions, 14 to 52 people will have serious skin reactions or brain inflammation, and one or two people may die.

"If it's one in a million for the general population, it will be one in a million for us," he said. "We're a subset of the population."

A thorough and careful screening process, though, will be in place to ensure those at increased risk will not receive the vaccination, Stikes said. The process is still being refined at this time and streamlining it is also in the works.

And as for the potency of the vaccine to be used, storage duration has had no ill effects, Stikes said.

"It's been freeze-dried," he said. "The vaccine has been tested for potency. Smallpox vaccine lasts a really long time."

Wild or man-made, smallpox disease symptoms are the same. Smallpox symptoms begin with high fever, head and body aches and possibly vomiting, according to Stikes. A bumpy rash follows. The bumps crust, scab, and fall off after a few weeks, leaving scars.

Following exposure to smallpox, the risk of death is high. Thirty percent of infected people die. For some survivors, there is the risk of blindness.

Smallpox is commonly spread by face-to-face contact with an infected person, especially one who is coughing. The virus travels in the cough's droplets of moisture.

Smallpox Fast Facts

THE VACCINE

- **Don't touch the site of the smallpox vaccination. If you do, wash your hands.**
- **The smallpox vaccination is safe, with low incidence of serious side effects or death. Normal side effects include fever, chills, body and headache and soreness at the vaccination site.**
- **Getting the smallpox vaccine is mandatory for all soldiers unless medically exempt.**
- **Soldiers who are medically exempt from getting the smallpox vaccination are still deployable.**

THE DISEASE

Smallpox is a serious disease, with a 30 percent chance of death. Survivors are often badly scarred and, in rare cases, blinded by the disease.

Smallpox symptoms include high fever, body rash, vomiting and head and body aches.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/index.asp or www.vaccines.army.mil/smallpox.asp.

POLAD is the top MNB(N) diplomat

Story by 1st Lt. Kevin McNamara

354th MPAD



by Maj. Lauren Muglia

Marshall Adair, POLAD, meets with many people in the community throughout MNB (N).

Perhaps you've heard the term POLAD in your travels throughout Multinational Brigade (North). Do you still wonder exactly what a POLAD does?

Adair carries the rank of a two-star general and is assigned to MNB(N) for one year. In the multi-faceted SFOR mission, one of the key roles is that of the Political Advisor. That job falls upon the shoulders of Mr. Marshall Adair. He has served in Europe, Africa, and in Asia and also worked with Ambassador Richard Holbrooke (the former United States Ambassador to the United Nations) on the Dayton Peace Accords, which laid the foundation for peace in the former Yugoslavia.

Adair's primary responsibility is "to learn more about and understand the political environment in which the 28th Division is operating and to advise the Commanding General and his staff about how the political environment affects the work they are doing...and in turn...how the military work the Division does affects the political environment."

There has been a POLAD on the ground since 1996 in Bosnia. It's unusual to have a POLAD at this level. Normally political advisors serve in four-star commands, he explained.

"In 1996, the early days, it was a military mission, but now the military is operating in a political environment," he said. "I am here to advise General von Trott. I also try to keep the U.S. Embassy (in Sarajevo) in the loop, although this is done rather informally."

While the Dayton Peace Accords and NATO succeeded in stopping the fighting, the issues that face Bosnia are myriad. "Building the foundation — politically, legally, and economically for this nation to survive" is the top priority, Adair said. While keeping the peace has been left to the multinational military forces on the ground and proven to be successful, helping rebuild Bosnia is a challenge for everyone involved.

The key international organizations currently operating in Bosnia are the U.N. Office of the High Representative, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the Organization for Security and Cooperation Europe, and the European Union Police Mission. However, without the presence of SFOR, these organizations cannot be successful, he said.

The challenge for SFOR and NATO are to "coordinate the military role and military resources with the international organizations working here," said Adair. International organizations remain the key to the future development of Bosnia. While the SFOR mission has downsized, the multinational military forces still have a big role to play, according to Adair.

"We (SFOR) not only help them by providing a peaceful and secure environment, but we help them in a broader way — 'they are backed up' — by the power and prestige of all the NATO forces on the ground."

Adair said there has been a noticeable increase in cooperation between international organizations operating in Bosnia and SFOR soldiers deserve credit for assisting this process. SFOR has also changed its agenda by looking at ways to support civilian institutions and civilian authorities in the region. "SFOR needs to be continually looking for opportunities to use military resources and military presence to promote the civilian agenda," he said.

"SFOR is a historic exercise in military and political cooperation," Adair said. He cited several reasons, including: the first time NATO has had to operate in a truly

multinational environment; a good all-round military exercise for NATO forces, and the inclusion of non-NATO forces; in a truly "integrated military structure." He used Russian forces as an example saying "Russia is now working with NATO, and each military organization has been learning to better operate and communicate with one another."

SFOR soldiers have also performed favorably, according to Adair.

"I am impressed with their professionalism, their knowledge and skill, and their interest in the broader environment in Bosnia meeting local officials and working with them."

This is Adair's first opportunity to work up close with the military. Throughout his career he has worked with senior Department of Defense officials and served as Deputy Secretary of State for European Affairs.

American forces are still in Bosnia for several reasons. "The U.S. has a strategic interest here — a realization of the need to maintain stability on the European continent. If the region would go back to war, serious refugee flows would occur, mostly to Europe. The U.S. has an interest in avoid-



by Maj. Lauren Muglia

Marshall Adair, Political Advisor, speaks to a priest at the Papraca Monastery.

ing these kinds of de-stabilizing forces on Europe," he said. "The region lies directly between Europe and the Middle East and between Europe, Greece and Turkey. We certainly have a very strong interest in seeing that a war does not break out again."

With his wife and son still in Washington, D.C., Adair remains optimistic about his 'tour of duty here' and about the future. When his tour ends, some time in late summer of this year he said he would love to be posted to the Far East, if the opportunity arises.

